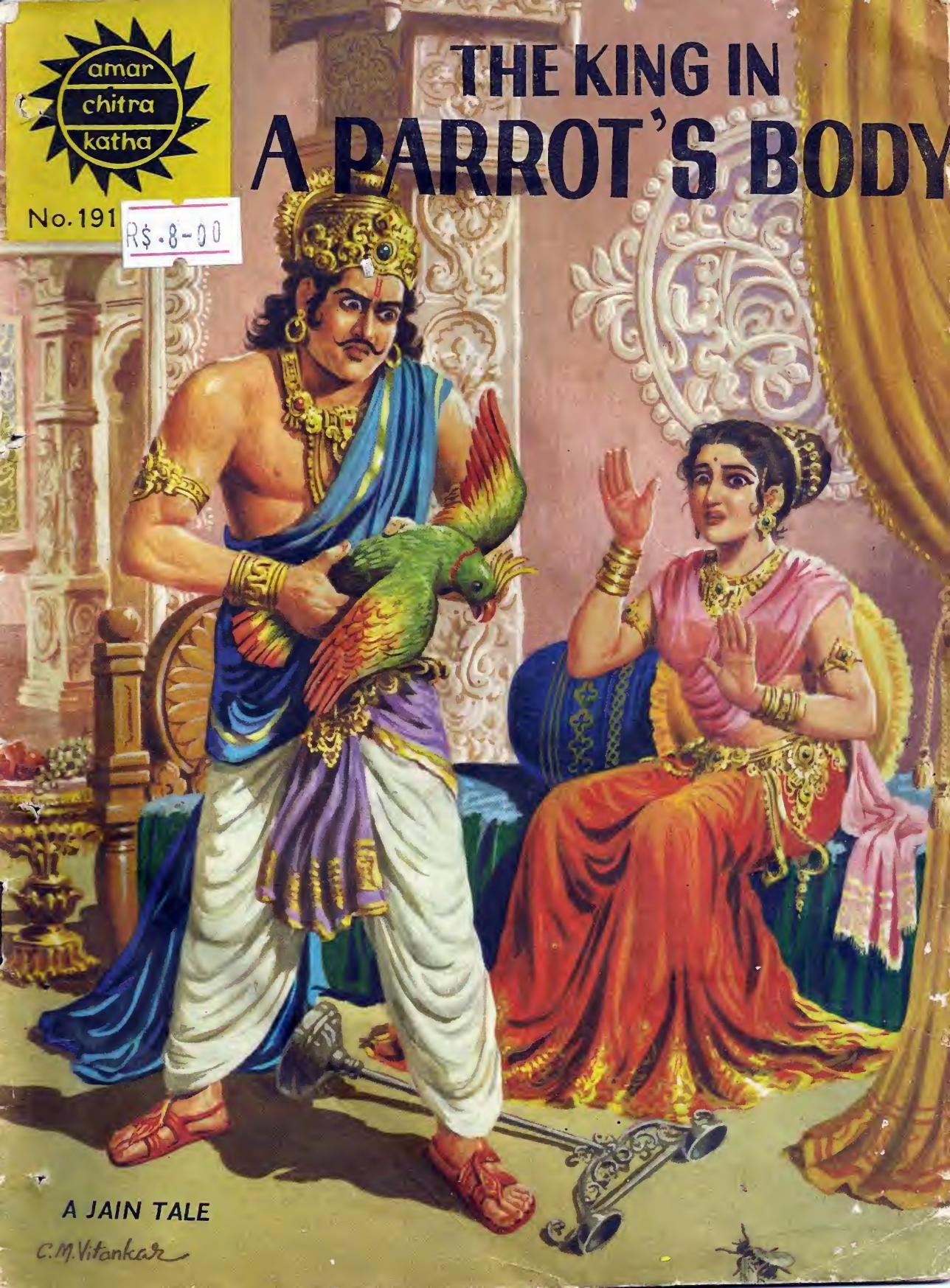




No.191

R\$.8-00

THE KING IN A PARROT'S BODY



A JAIN TALE

C.M. Vitankar

Jain monks took a keen interest in the spiritual uplift of the common people. To make their difficult philosophy accessible to the layman, they used the medium of stories.

Most of the stories teach that meritorious acts bring prosperity and evil acts untold misery. According to Jain philosophy, man is the master of his own destiny. He reaps what he sows. No outside force can help him get what he does not deserve, nor can it prevent him from getting what he does deserve.

The story of King Shuklapaksha has an underlying allegory. Shuklapaksha literally means the bright half of a lunar month and Krishnapaksha, the dark half. The king symbolises good and the minister evil. The confrontation between the two, and the ultimate triumph of good over evil, is the subject of this story.

Rajiv T. Mukerji.

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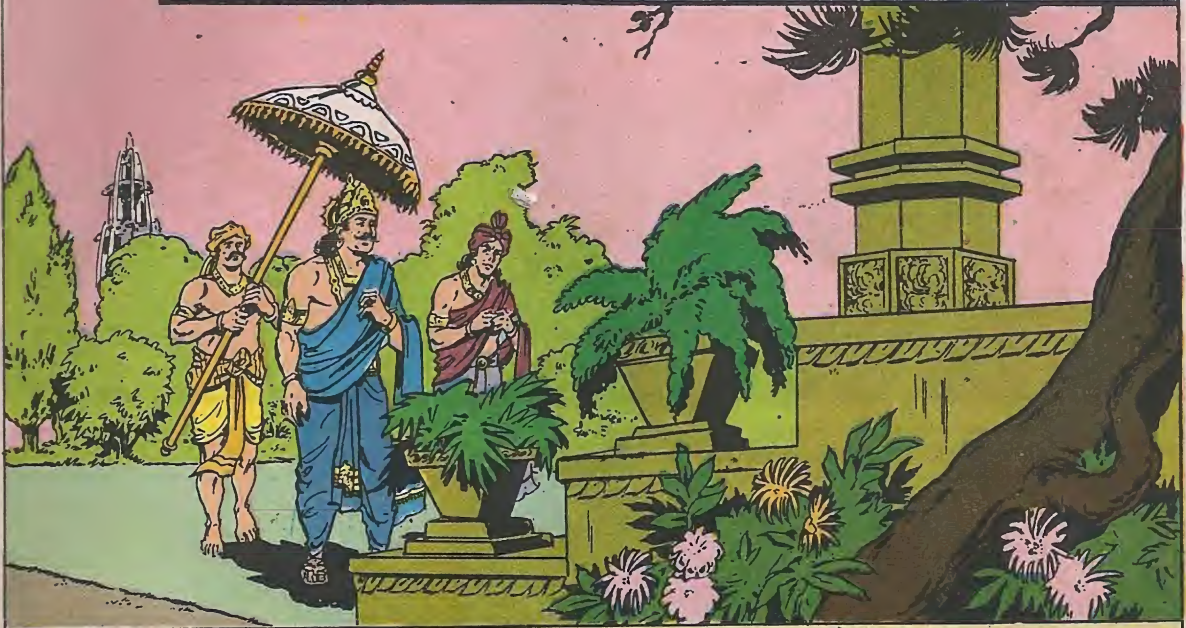
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THE KING IN A PARROT'S BODY



LONG, LONG, AGO THERE WAS A NOBLE KING CALLED SHUKLAPAKSHA WHO REIGNED OVER A CITY CALLED PRITHVIBHUSHANA. HE WAS SO PURE OF HEART THAT HE COULD NEVER SEE BAD IN ANOTHER. HE HAD A MINISTER, KRISHNAPAKSHA, WHO, SAD TO SAY, WAS A WICKED MAN.

ONE MORNING —

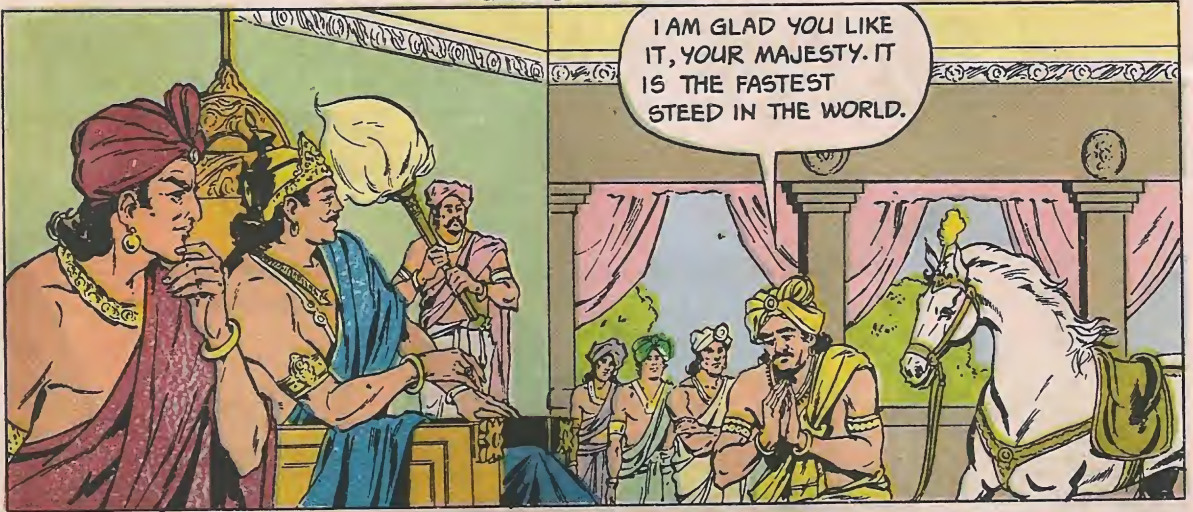
YOUR MAJESTY, THERE IS A MERCHANT OUTSIDE FROM A FAR-OFF COUNTRY. HE HAS A GIFT FOR YOU.

SHOW HIM IN.



WHAT A FINE HORSE!





AS THE KING EXAMINED THE HORSE, AN EVIL PLAN TOOK SHAPE IN THE MINISTER'S MIND.



BEFORE THE MERCHANT COULD UTTER A WORD, THE KING WAS ON THE HORSE...



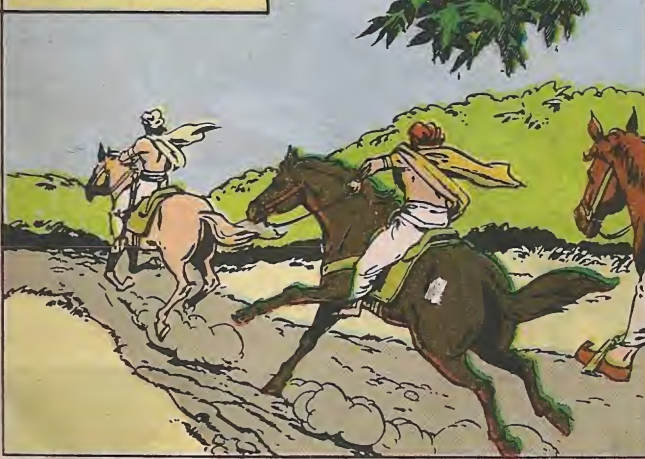
...AND OUT OF THE PALACE.

OH, NO! THE STEED
NEEDS TO GET USED
TO HIM. THE KING
WILL KILL HIMSELF!

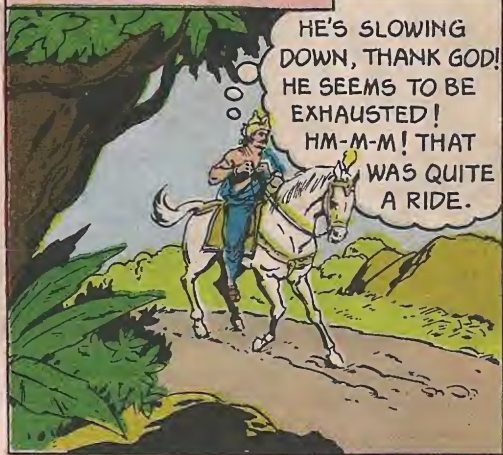
THEN I WILL BE
KING! I'LL WAIT FOR
A FEW DAYS TO
MAKE SURE HE'S
DEAD!



MEANWHILE, A FEW COURTIERS IMMEDIATELY
MOUNTED THEIR STEEDS AND WENT OUT
AFTER THE KING.



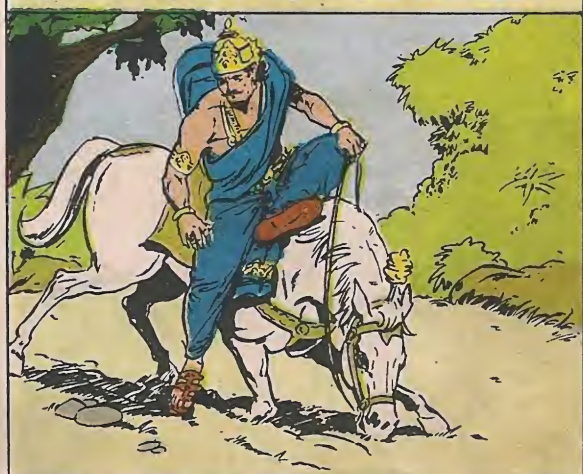
BUT THE KING AND HIS HORSE WERE
FAR, FAR AWAY, IN A DENSE FOREST.
TOWARDS EVENING —



SUDDENLY THE HORSE STOOD STILL.



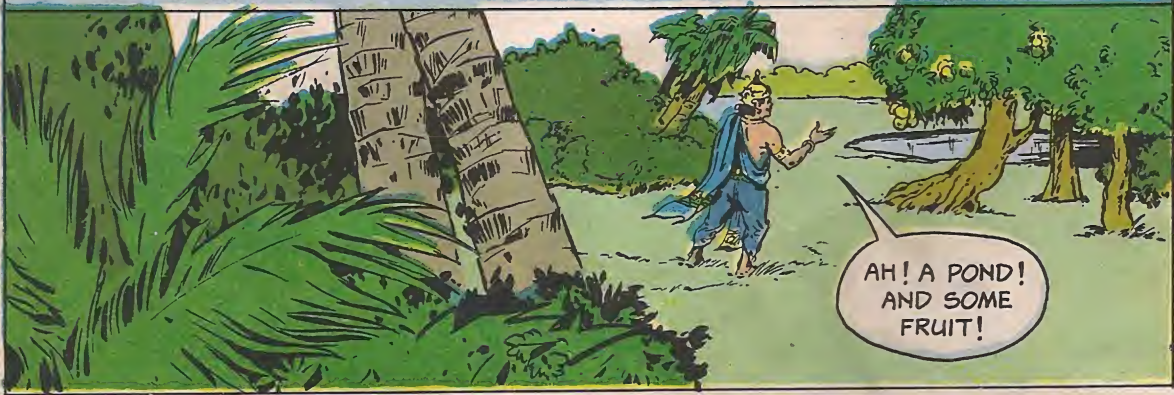
THE NEXT MOMENT ITS KNEES BUCKLED...



...AND IT FELL DEAD.



LEAVING THE HORSE, THE TIRED, THIRSTY AND HUNGRY KING WALKED WEARILY ON.



HE REFRESHED HIMSELF AT THE POND
AND BEGAN TO PLUCK SOME FRUIT.
SUDDENLY —

WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT BRINGS YOU
TO THIS FOREST
ALONE, YOUNG
MAN?



THE KING THEN TOLD HIM WHO HE WAS AND HOW HE HAPPENED TO BE THERE.



O SAGE, WHO
IS THAT
MAIDEN?

SHE IS
NIVRITTI, THE
DAUGHTER OF
THE KING OF
THE VIDYA-
DHARAS*.

WHY IS SHE
HERE?

IT'S A LONG
STORY BUT I'LL
TELL IT AS
BRIEFLY AS
I CAN.

"ONE DAY, A VIDYADHARA FLEW INTO HER FATHER'S PALACE ...

...AND CARRIED NIVRITTI AWAY."

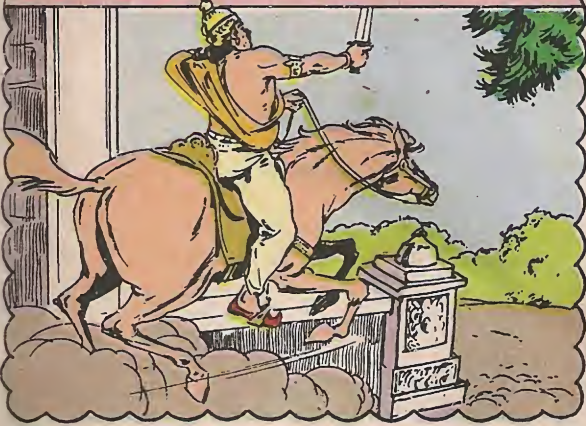
HELP!
HELP!



"HEARING HER SCREAMS, HER FATHER
RUSHED OUT..."



...AND GALLOPED AFTER THEM."



"THE VIDYADHARA TURNED ROUND
AND SAW THE KING."

OH! OH! IT'S HER
FATHER! I'D BETTER
GET RID OF THE
GIRL.



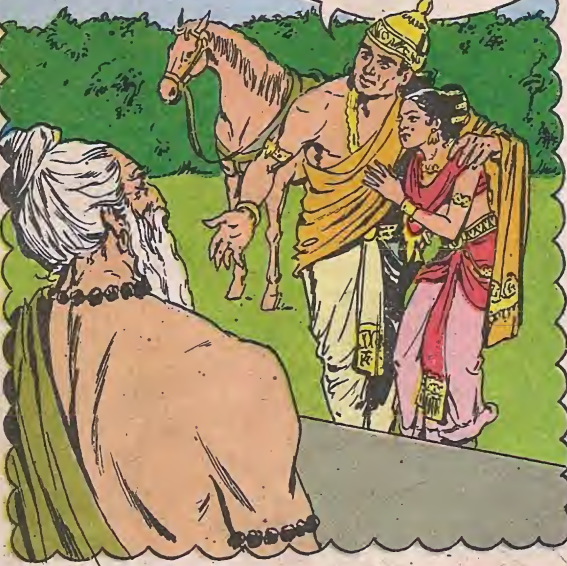
"HE DROPPED HER IN FRONT OF MY HERMITAGE AND FLED FOR HIS LIFE."



"A FEW MINUTES LATER HER FATHER
CAME UP."

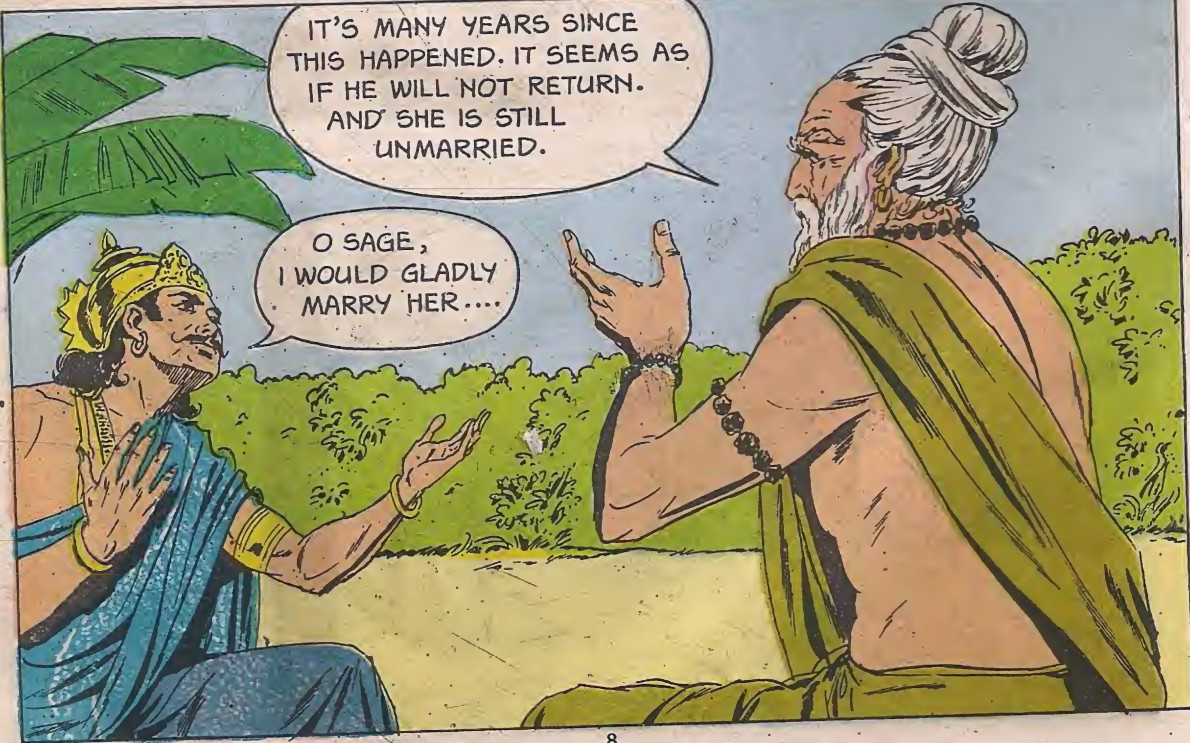
I'M GOING AFTER THE
RASCAL AND WILL NOT
BE BACK TILL HE IS
CAUGHT AND PUNISHED.
PLEASE LOOK AFTER
MY DAUGHTER TILL
I RETURN.

BUT IF I AM DELAYED,
PLEASE MARRY HER
TO A WORTHY MAN.
HE MUST POSSESS
THE POWER OF
ENTERING A DEAD
BODY.



IT'S MANY YEARS SINCE
THIS HAPPENED. IT SEEMS AS
IF HE WILL NOT RETURN.
AND SHE IS STILL
UNMARRIED.

O SAGE,
I WOULD GLADLY
MARRY HER....



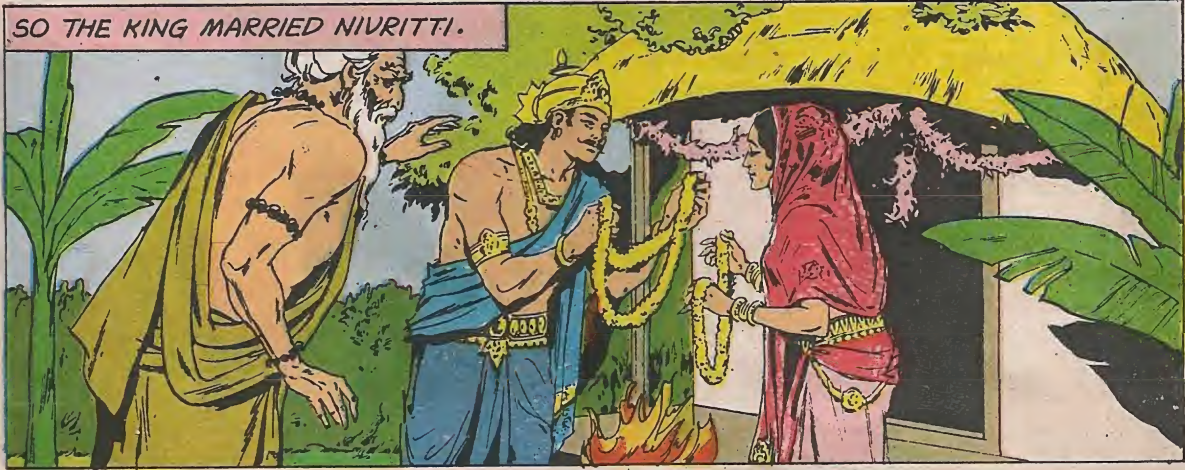
WELL, YOU ARE CERTAINLY A DESERVING PERSON. IF ONLY YOU HAD THE POWER TO ENTER A DEAD BODY!

I MUST MAKE HER MY QUEEN. ISN'T THERE SOME WAY OUT?

ALL RIGHT. YOU MAY MARRY HER. BUT TILL YOU ARE IN POSSESSION OF THE POWER DO NOT TAKE HER INTO THE INNER APARTMENTS OF YOUR PALACE.

I'LL DO AS YOU SAY, HOLY ONE. ONLY LET HER COME WITH ME.

SO THE KING MARRIED NIVRITTI.



JUST THEN THE COURTIER'S WHO HAD FOLLOWED THE KING FOUND THEIR WAY TO THE HUT. IT HAD TAKEN THEM A LONG TIME TO REACH THE PLACE.

WE HAVE FOUND THE KING!

THANK GOD HE IS SAFE!



AH! MY MEN! YOU'VE
COME JUST IN TIME
TO ESCORT
US HOME.

WE ARE HONOURED, YOUR
MAJESTY. TWO OF US WILL RIDE
ON AHEAD AND INFORM THE
MINISTER THAT YOU ARE
WELL.



SOON THE PARTY WAS READY TO SET OFF.

REMEMBER
THE
CONDITION!

I WON'T FORGET. I WILL
DO ALL I CAN TO
ACQUIRE THE POWER.



ON THE WAY —

MY LORD, I AM
CURIOUS ABOUT
ONE THING. HOW
DID YOU FIND
OUR HUT ?



WHEN THE KING TOLD HER THE STORY —

THE MINISTER SEEMS TO BE AN
EVIL MAN. IF HE CARED FOR THE
KING'S SAFETY HE WOULD NOT
HAVE ASKED HIM TO MOUNT A
STEED THAT HAD NOT
FIRST BEEN
TAMED.



BUT SHE DID NOT VOICE HER THOUGHTS.

MEANWHILE AT THE PALACE —

SIR, TWO OF THE COURTIER'S WHO WENT AFTER THE KING HAVE RETURNED WITH NEWS OF HIM.

OH! IF HE IS ALIVE MY PLANS HAVE FAILED!

SEND THEM IN.

SIR, THE KING IS SAFE. HE IS ON HIS WAY BACK WITH THE QUEEN. THEY SHOULD BE HERE ANY MINUTE!

THE QUEEN?

YES, SIR. SHE IS A VIDYADHARA PRINCESS! HIS MAJESTY MARRIED HER IN THE FOREST.

I CAN HEAR HOOF-BEATS. THEY'RE HERE!

PRETENDING TO BE HAPPY, THE MINISTER RUSHED OUT TO GREET THE KING.



SUDDENLY HE STOPPED AND STARED.

SHE'S THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN I'VE EVER SEEN.



AND HE WALKED SLOWLY UP TO THEM.

THIS IS MY MINISTER, KRISHNA-PAKSHIKA.

OH! SO THIS IS HIM! I'M NOW SURE THAT HE IS AN EVIL MAN. I MUST WARN MY HUSBAND ABOUT HIM, SOON.



THE QUEEN WILL LIVE AT THE PALACE IN THE ROYAL PARK.

HOW STRANGE! WHY NOT IN HIS PALACE? ANYWAY, I'LL SOON KNOW.



LATER, INSIDE HIS PALACE THE KING SAT BROODING OVER HIS PROBLEM.

WHAT SHALL I DO? HOW AM I TO ACQUIRE THE POWER? I'LL HAVE TO CONFIDE IN KRISHNAPAKSHIKA.



WHEN THE MINISTER HEARD THE WHOLE STORY FROM THE KING —

THAT MEANS NIVRITTI WILL BELONG TO THE MAN WHO ACQUIRES THIS POWER....



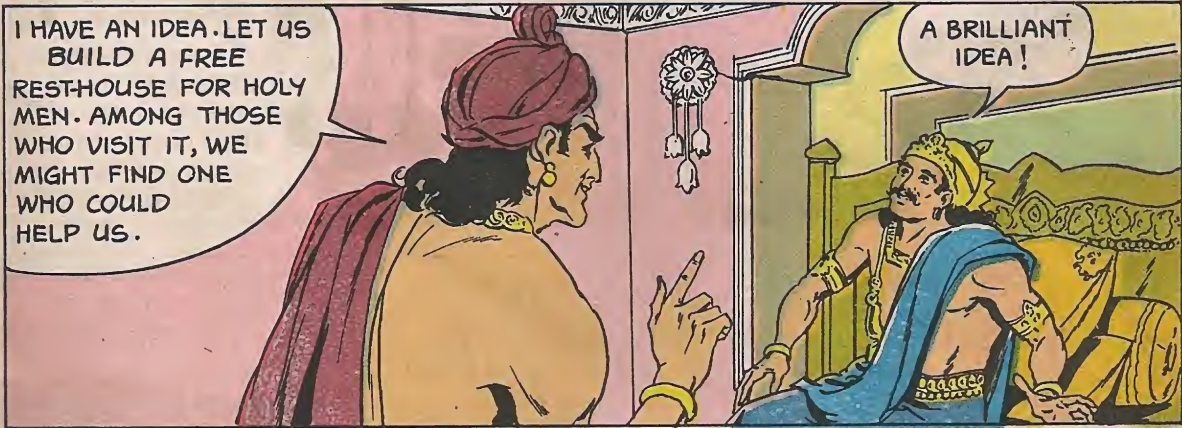
WHAT SHALL I DO?
TO WHOM SHOULD I TURN?

BUT IN WHATEVER WAY YOU GET IT, I, TOO, SHALL GET IT, AND MAKE NIVRITTI MY WIFE!



I HAVE AN IDEA. LET US BUILD A FREE RESTHOUSE FOR HOLY MEN. AMONG THOSE WHO VISIT IT, WE MIGHT FIND ONE WHO COULD HELP US.

A BRILLIANT IDEA!



SO THE RESTHOUSE WAS SOON CONSTRUCTED AND HUNDREDS OF HOLY MEN VISITED IT EVERY DAY. SIX MONTHS WENT BY.

ANY LUCK TODAY?

NONE AT ALL. I DON'T THINK IT WAS SUCH A GOOD IDEA AFTER ALL.



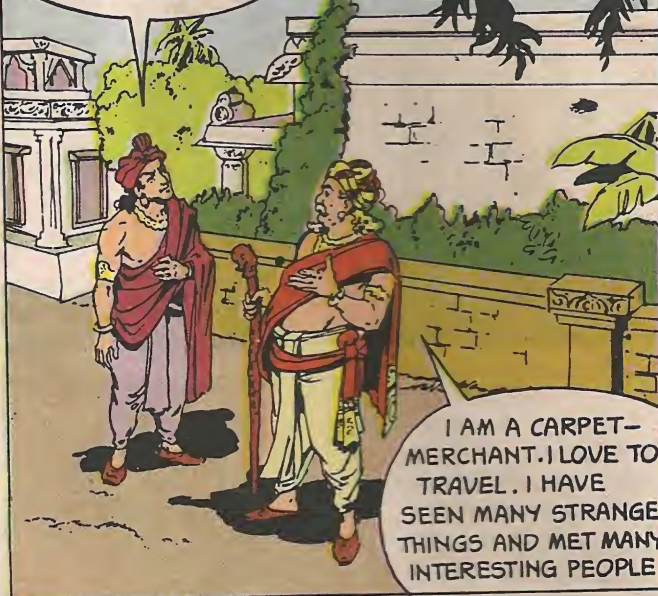
SOMETHING IS BOUND TO HAPPEN. WE'LL KEEP TRYING.

WE MUST TRY SOME OTHER MEANS AS WELL AND NOT DEPEND ONLY ON HOLY MEN.



THE NEXT DAY, ON HIS WAY TO THE RESTHOUSE THE MINISTER SAW A STRANGER.

WHO ARE YOU, SIR? I HAVE NEVER SEEN YOU IN THIS CITY BEFORE.



I AM A CARPET-MERCHANT. I LOVE TO TRAVEL. I HAVE SEEN MANY STRANGE THINGS AND MET MANY INTERESTING PEOPLE.

SEEN MANY STRANGE THINGS... MET MANY INTERESTING PEOPLE... SEEN MANY STRANGE THINGS....



I'M SURE YOU HAVEN'T MET A MAN WHO COULD ENTER A DEAD BODY!

I HAVE, TOO. HE'S A YOGI. BUT HE IS DIFFICULT TO REACH.



THE MINISTER COULDN'T BELIEVE HIS GOOD LUCK.

I MUST MEET THIS YOGI, NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT IT MAY BE TO REACH HIM.

ALL RIGHT. LISTEN CAREFULLY. ABOUT NINETY-SIX MILES FROM MY CITY THERE ARE TWO PALM TREES ON EITHER SIDE OF A PATH WHICH LEADS INTO A DENSE FOREST.

ON ONE OF THEM IS PERCHED A CROW AND ON THE OTHER A SWAN. AS YOU GO DEEP INTO THE FOREST YOU WILL SEE A MOUNTAIN.

AND THEN?

ON THE PEAK OF THAT MOUNTAIN SITS YOGI SADANANDA. HE HAS THE POWER YOU ARE LOOKING FOR. AND IF HE IS PLEASED WITH YOU, HE MAY IMPART THE SECRET TO YOU.

THE MINISTER WAS DISMAYED TO HEAR THAT.



SO THE MINISTER WENT TO THE KING AND TOLD HIM EVERYTHING.



THE MINISTER FELT FOOLISH.

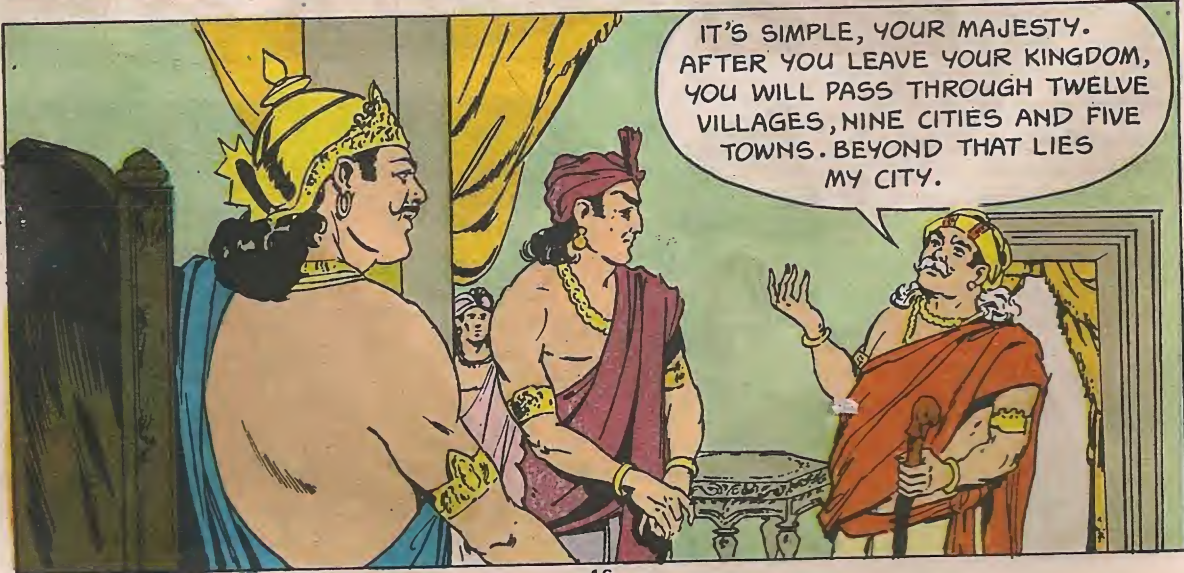


WHEN THE MERCHANT WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING —

YOU FORGOT TO GIVE US THE LOCATION OF YOUR CITY, MY GOOD MAN.



IT'S SIMPLE, YOUR MAJESTY. AFTER YOU LEAVE YOUR KINGDOM, YOU WILL PASS THROUGH TWELVE VILLAGES, NINE CITIES AND FIVE TOWNS. BEYOND THAT LIES MY CITY.



AS SOON AS THE MERCHANT LEFT, THE KING WENT WITH THE GOOD NEWS TO NIVRITTI.

THE MINISTER AND I WILL SET OUT IMMEDIATELY TO FIND THE YOGI.



I AM DELIGHTED WITH OUR GOOD FORTUNE. BUT I DO NOT TRUST YOUR MINISTER. HE IS CRAFTY, MALICIOUS AND UNGRATEFUL. YOUR VERY LIFE WILL BE IN DANGER IF YOU TAKE HIM WITH YOU.



IF THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL, I'LL ASK HIM TO STAY BEHIND.



THE KING ACCORDINGLY SENT FOR HIS MINISTER.

I'LL GO ALONE. I WANT YOU TO LOOK AFTER THE KINGDOM WHILE I AM AWAY.

HOW CAN I LET YOU GO ALONE, YOUR MAJESTY? THE COURTIER'S CAN LOOK AFTER THE KINGDOM WHILE WE'RE AWAY.

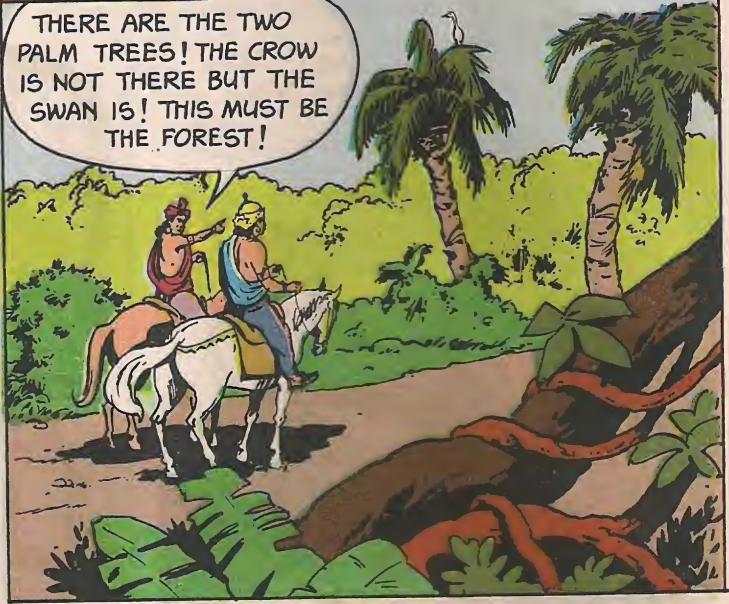


HOW CONCERNED HE
IS ABOUT MY SAFETY!
NIVRITTI, MUST BE
MISTAKEN ABOUT
HIM.



THE TWO SET OUT AND AFTER TRAVELLING A LONG
DISTANCE —

THERE ARE THE TWO
PALM TREES! THE CROW
IS NOT THERE BUT THE
SWAN IS! THIS MUST BE
THE FOREST!



THEY MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE
FOREST. SUDDENLY —



LOOK, THE
MOUNTAIN!

THEY RODE UP THE MOUNTAIN AND SOON
REACHED THE TOP.

CAN YOU SEE
THAT SHINING
FIGURE ?

YES, IT'S
THE YOGI!



AS THEY CAME NEAR HIM —



THEY SAT BEFORE THE YOGI WHO WAS DEEP IN MEDITATION.



AT LAST THE YOGI OPENED HIS EYES, BUT HE TOOK NO NOTICE OF THEM.

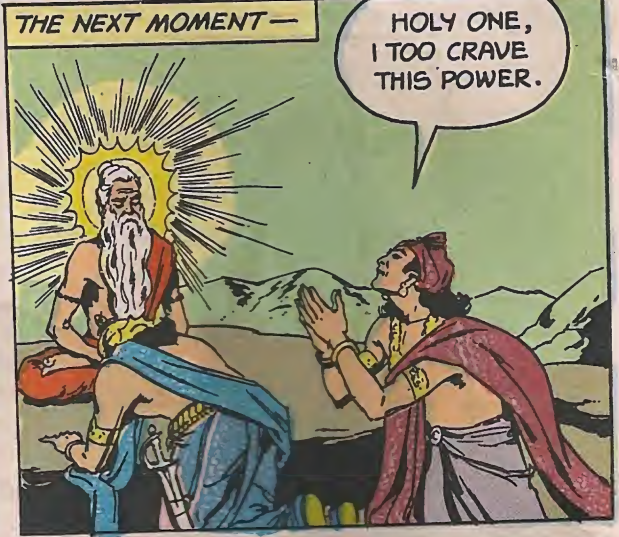
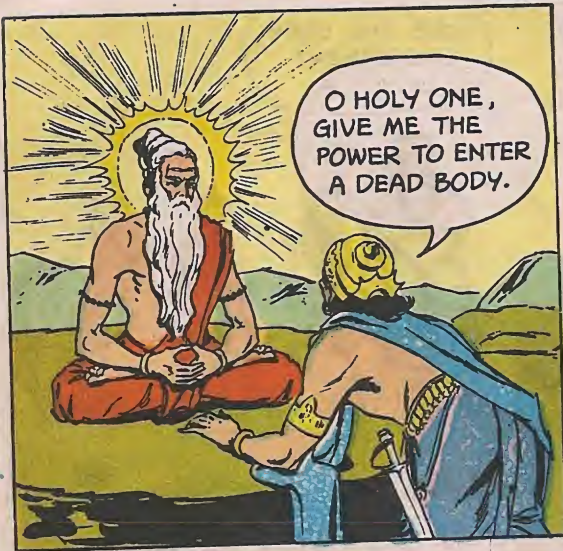


FOR DAYS THE YOGI IGNORED THEM BUT THE KING AND THE MINISTER WAITED PATIENTLY.

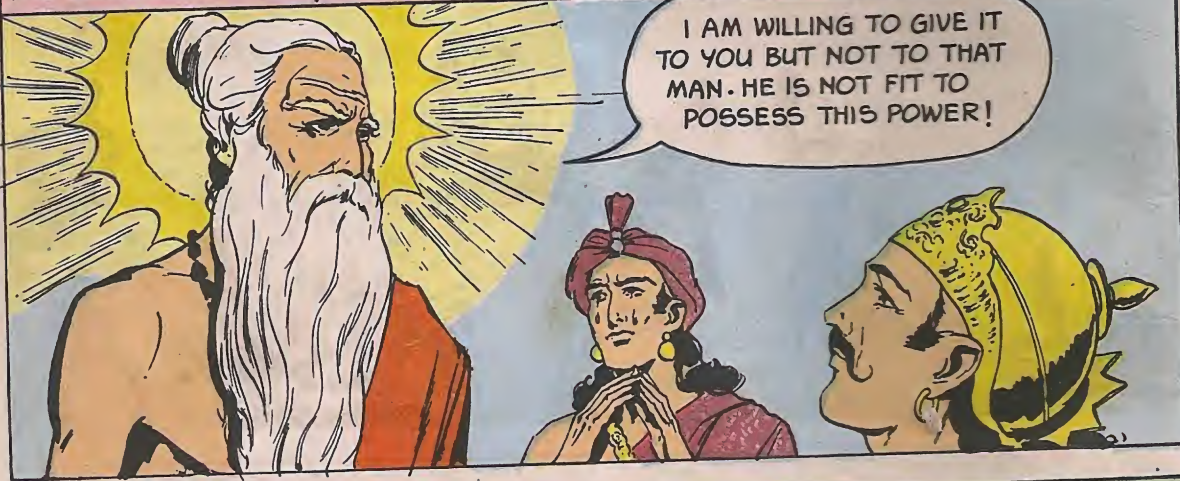


AT LAST, ONE DAY, THE YOGI SPOKE TO THE KING, IGNORING THE MINISTER.



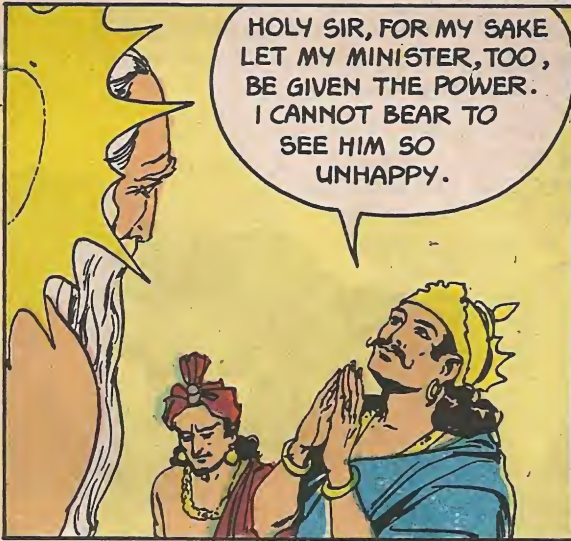


THE YOGI, HOWEVER, DID NOT EVEN LOOK AT HIM. HE ADDRESSED THE KING.

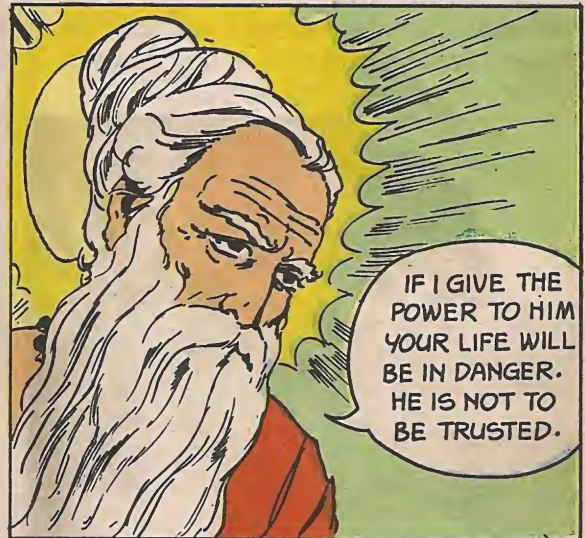


THE MINISTER COULD NOT CONTROL HIS DISAPPOINTMENT.





HOLY SIR, FOR MY SAKE
LET MY MINISTER, TOO,
BE GIVEN THE POWER.
I CANNOT BEAR TO
SEE HIM SO
UNHAPPY.



IF I GIVE THE
POWER TO HIM
YOUR LIFE WILL
BE IN DANGER.
HE IS NOT TO
BE TRUSTED.

BUT THE KIND KING REFUSED TO BELIEVE THAT HIS MINISTER WOULD HARM HIM.



HOLY SIR, I TRUST
HIM. PLEASE LET HIM
HAVE THE POWER
TOO.



ALL RIGHT, BUT
I WARN YOU,
BE WARY OF
HIM.



AND THE YOGI IMPART-
ED THE UNIQUE POWER
TO THEM BOTH.

THE KING AND HIS MINISTER SET OUT ON THEIR RETURN JOURNEY. A FEW DAYS LATER, THEY CAME TO A POOL —



SUDDENLY THEY SPIED SOMETHING BEHIND A THICK SHRUB.

WHAT'S THIS?
A DEAD ELEPHANT!
HERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TEST MY NEWLY ACQUIRED POWER!

The king and minister are walking on a path through a forest. In the background, a large dead elephant lies on the ground. The king is looking at the elephant with a determined expression.

I'M GOING TO ENTER THE BODY OF THIS ELEPHANT. PLEASE TAKE CARE OF MY BODY TILL I COME BACK.

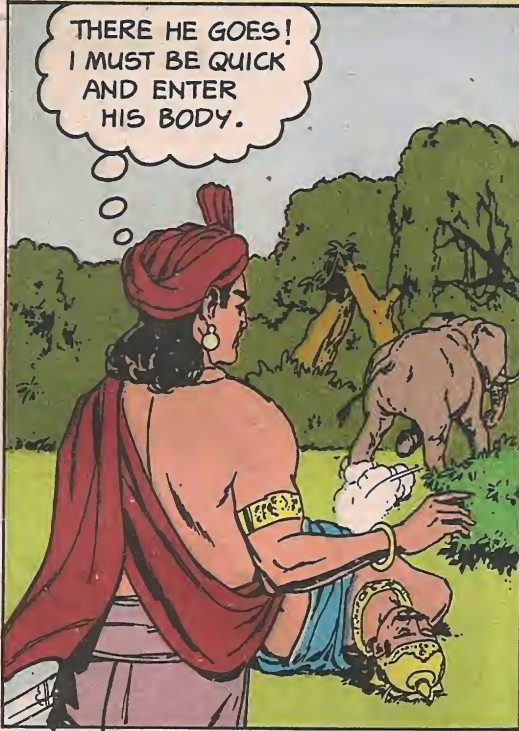
The king is standing next to the dead elephant, pointing towards it. The minister is standing behind him, looking on with a concerned expression.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I NEVER DREAMT IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO GET RID OF HIM!

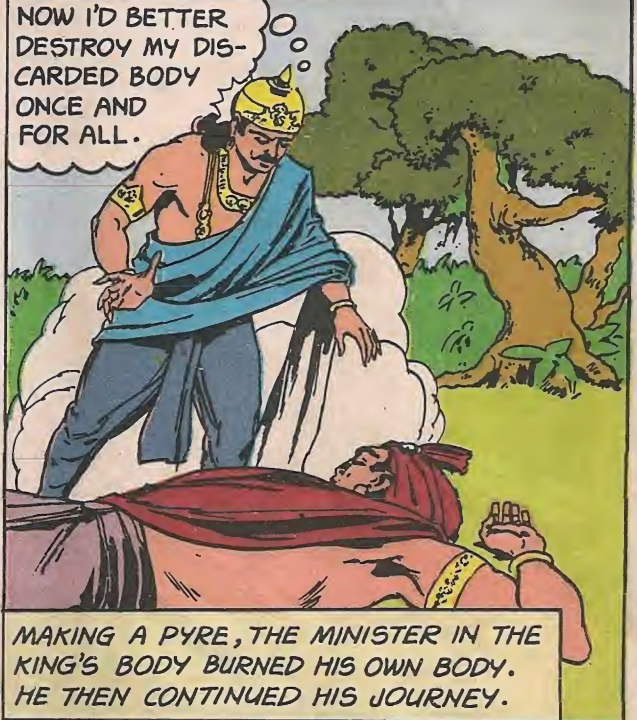
THE NEXT MOMENT THE DEAD ELEPHANT CAME ALIVE ...



... AND WANDERED INTO THE FOREST.

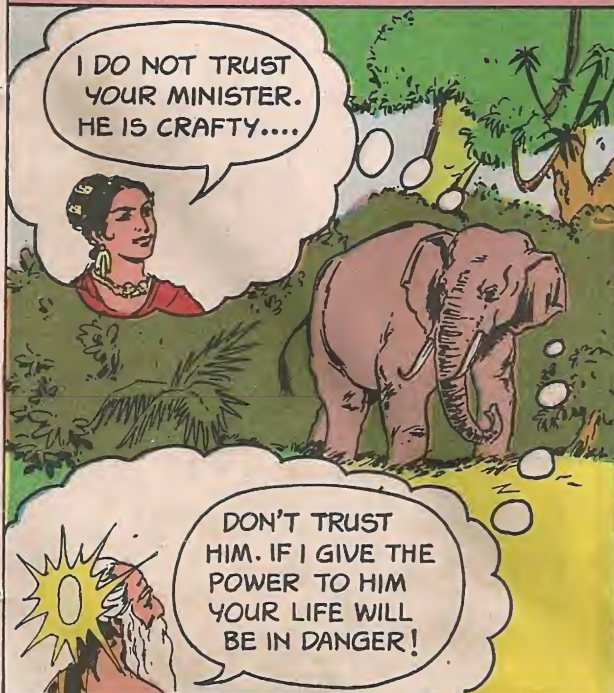


THE NEXT MOMENT —



MAKING A PYRE, THE MINISTER IN THE KING'S BODY BURNED HIS OWN BODY. HE THEN CONTINUED HIS JOURNEY.

MEANWHILE, THE KING IN THE ELEPHANT'S BODY RETURNED AND FOUND BOTH HIS BODY AND HIS MINISTER MISSING.



MEANWHILE, AS SOON AS THE MINISTER IN THE KING'S BODY REACHED THE PALACE HE SENT FOR THE COURTIER.

THERE IS A ROGUE ELEPHANT ABOUT. IF HE ENTERS THE CITY, KILL HIM IMMEDIATELY.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.



THEN HE WENT TO NIVRITTI'S PALACE IN THE ROYAL PARK.

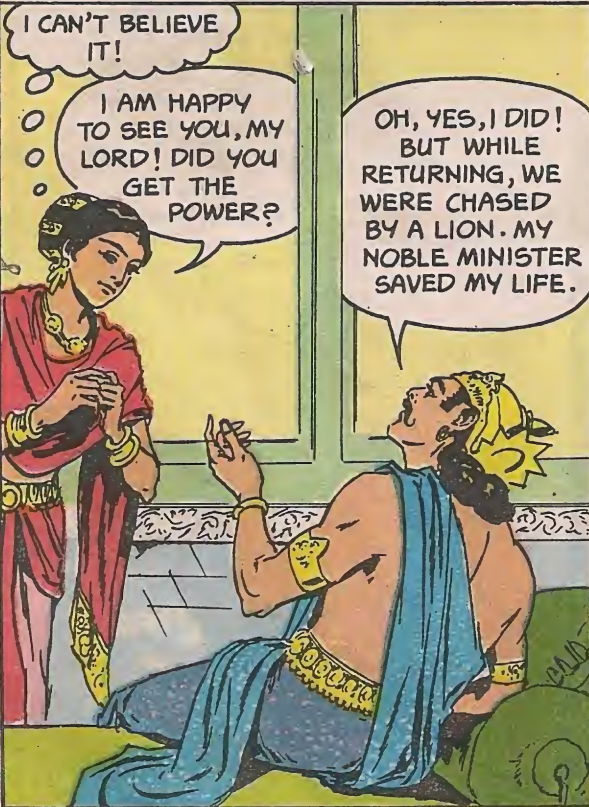
AH! NIVRITTI, I'M BACK.



I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

I AM HAPPY TO SEE YOU, MY LORD! DID YOU GET THE POWER?

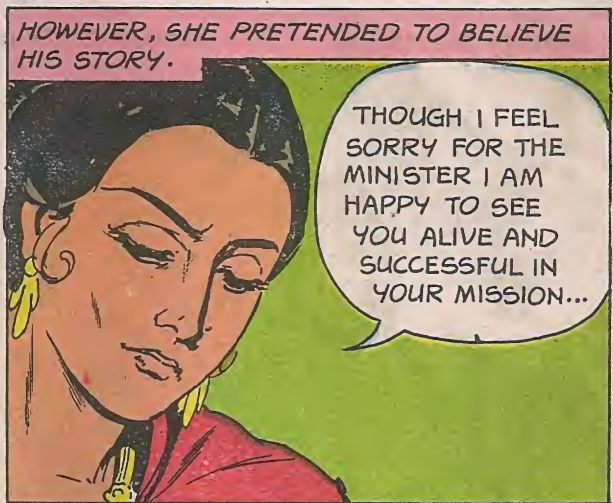
OH, YES, I DID! BUT WHILE RETURNING, WE WERE CHASED BY A LION. MY NOBLE MINISTER SAVED MY LIFE.



WHERE IS HE?

ALAS! HE LOST HIS LIFE, WHILE SAVING MINE!

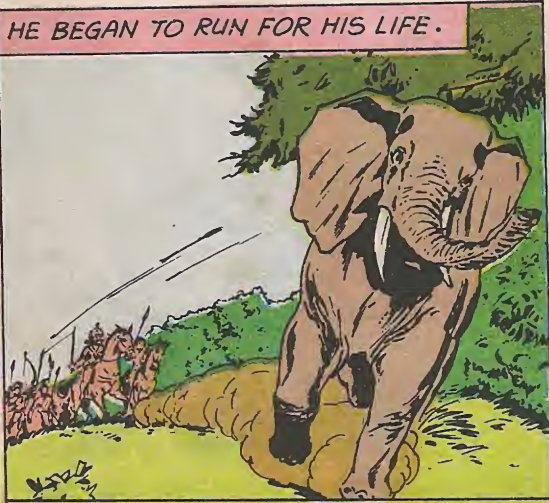




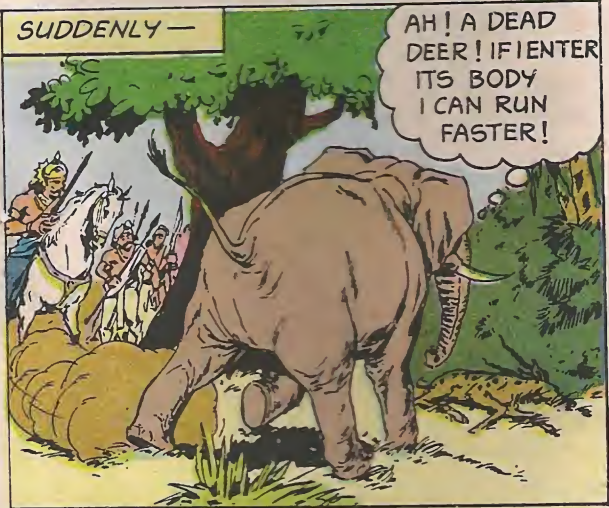
ARMING THEMSELVES THEY BEGAN TO CHASE THE KING IN THE ELEPHANT'S BODY.



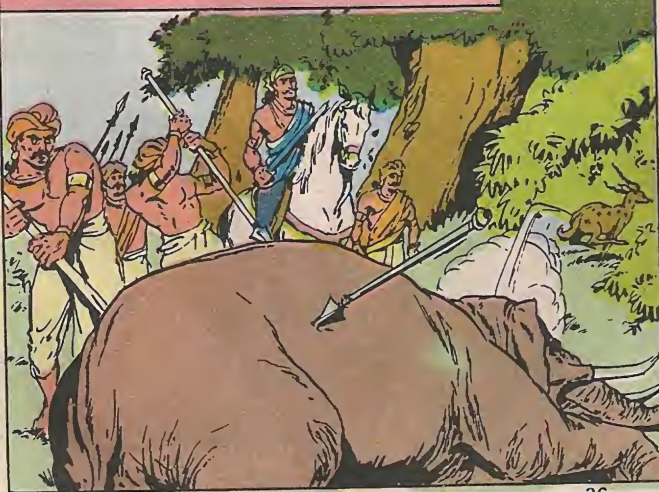
HE BEGAN TO RUN FOR HIS LIFE.



SUDDENLY —

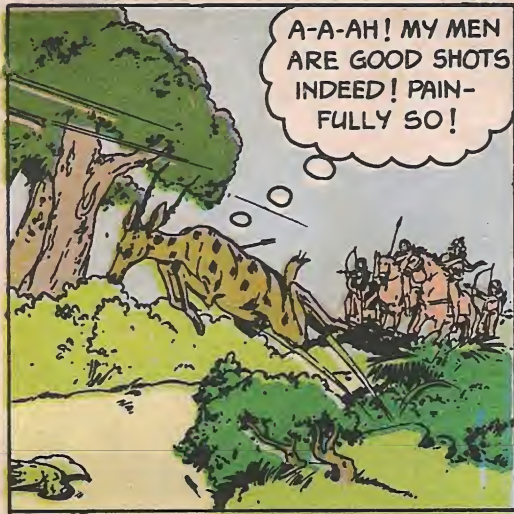


THE NEXT MOMENT THE ELEPHANT FELL DEAD AND THE DEER SPURTED AWAY.



QUICK! FOLLOW THAT DEER AND SHOOT IT DOWN!





A-A-AH! MY MEN
ARE GOOD SHOTS
INDEED! PAIN-
FULLY SO!

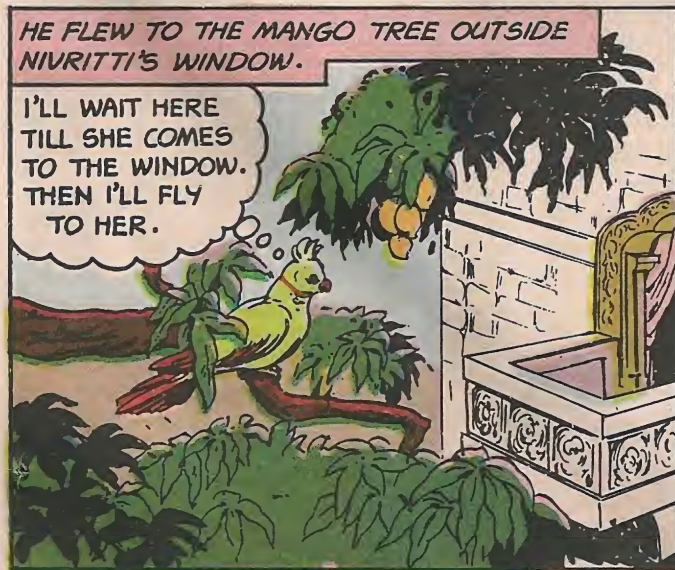


SUDDENLY HE SPIED A DEAD
PARROT AND ENTERED ITS
BODY. BUT THE MINISTER
AND HIS MEN NOTICED ONLY
THE DEAD DEER.

IT'S DEAD! GOOD
WORK, MY MEN.
YOU SHALL BE
WELL
REWARDED.

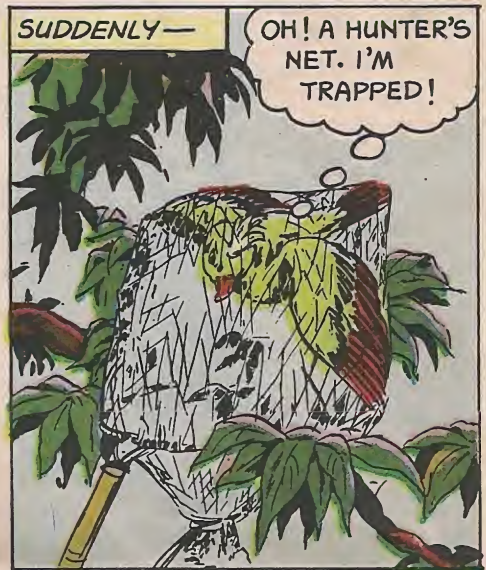


THANK GOD!
THEY DID NOT
NOTICE ME! I'LL
FLY TO DEAR
NIVRITTI'S
PALACE.



HE FLEW TO THE MANGO TREE OUTSIDE
NIVRITTI'S WINDOW.

I'LL WAIT HERE
TILL SHE COMES
TO THE WINDOW.
THEN I'LL FLY
TO HER.



SUDDENLY—

OH! A HUNTER'S
NET. I'M
TRAPPED!

THE KING IN THE PARROT'S BODY DID SOME QUICK THINKING.

IF YOU DO AS I TELL YOU, YOU CAN MAKE A LOT OF MONEY.

THIS BIRD TALKS! I MUST BE DREAMING!

THIS IS NO DREAM. YOU CAN SELL ME FOR A LOT OF MONEY.

YOU ARE RIGHT. I COULD GET AT LEAST A LAKH OF RUPEES.

AT THE MARKET PLACE, THE BIRD SPOTTED NIVRITTI'S MAID.

HOW IS YOUR MISTRESS? IS SHE ALL RIGHT?

YES, HE IS A TALKING BIRD. YOU CAN HAVE HIM FOR A LAKH OF RUPEES.

HE IS TALKING TO ME!

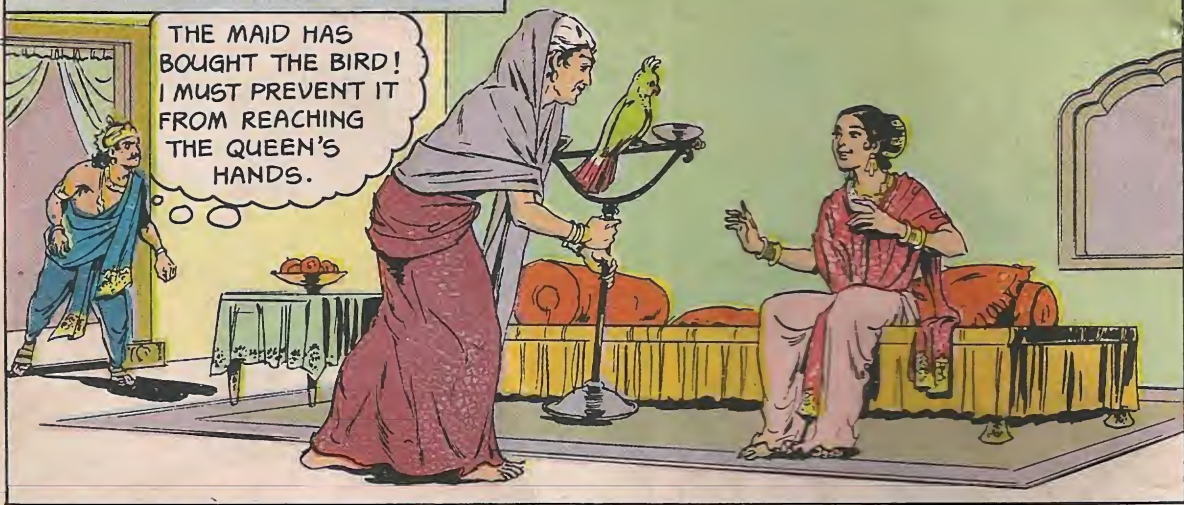
THE MAID RAN TO NIVRITTI AND TOLD HER ALL ABOUT THE PARROT.

...AND DON'T THINK I'M MAD! I HEARD THE PARROT WITH MY OWN EARS.

I MUST BUY THAT BIRD! GO TO THE KING AND ASK HIM FOR THE MONEY.



HE WENT TO THE QUEEN'S PALACE.



A NAMELESS FEAR GRIPPED HIS HEART. HE SEIZED THE BIRD FROM THE STARTLED MAID.

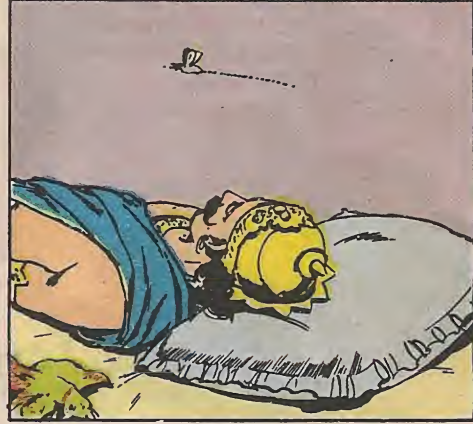


SHE WEPT SO BITTERLY THAT THE MINISTER DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. AT LAST —



ALL RIGHT! GIVE ME A FEW MINUTES AND I'LL BRING YOUR PARROT BACK TO LIFE.

HE WENT INTO THE NEXT ROOM WITH THE DEAD PARROT. THEN, LEAVING THE KING'S BODY...



...HE ENTERED THE PARROT'S BODY AND FLEW BACK INTO THE QUEEN'S ROOM.



MEANWHILE —

I NEVER DREAMT THAT THINGS WOULD WORK OUT SO WELL.



THE KING LEFT THE BEE AND ENTERING HIS OWN BODY AT LAST ...

...HE WENT TO HIS QUEEN.



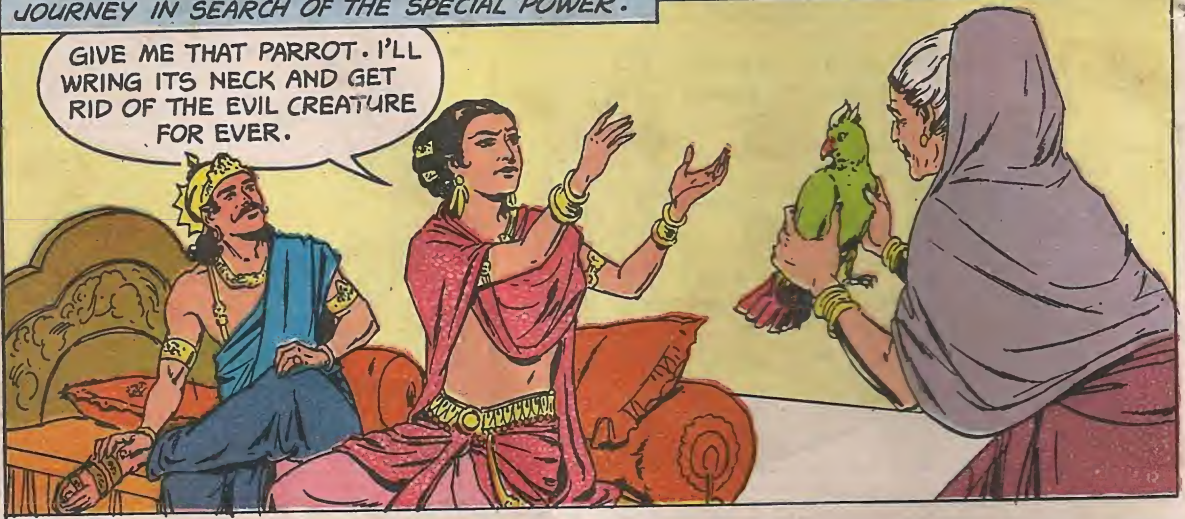
NIVRITTI!

MY LORD!

I'VE BEEN DUPED!

THE KING TOLD HER THE WHOLE STORY OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED DURING THE JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF THE SPECIAL POWER.

GIVE ME THAT PARROT. I'LL WRING ITS NECK AND GET RID OF THE EVIL CREATURE FOR EVER.



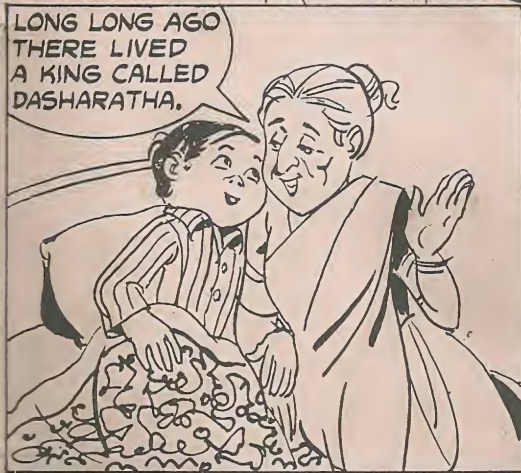
WHY DO YOU WANT TO BURDEN YOURSELF WITH THE SIN OF KILLING HIM? LEAVE HIM TO HIS OWN FATE. BETTER STILL, WE'LL PUT HIM IN AN IRON CAGE SO THAT HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO ANY MORE MISCHIEF WITH THIS PRECIOUS POWER.



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